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Date: February 16, 2012

To: Senate Natural Resources, Environment and Great Lakes Committee

From: Matt Smego
Legislative Counsel

Re: Testimony in support of HB 4207

Michigan Farm Bureau (MFB) is the state's largest general farm organization, representing over 48,000 Michigan farm family members.

MFB is a grassroots organization where members at the local level develop, debate and adopt the policies for the organization. MFB policy #34 titled Plant Pests and Diseases states, "We support exceptions from Rule 310 to allow the limited burning of unusable and untreated wood fruit bins to reduce overwintering habitat for fruit pests."

We support HB 4207 as passed the House, as it contains an allowance for the burning of wooden bins for disease or pest control purposes. Without this, there are no clear alternatives which are not costly or burdensome to farmers. These bins are used for a variety of fruit and vegetable crops and the disease control issue exists for both.

The limited ban on residential open burning contained in the bill meets MFB policy by allowing for the open burning of biodegradable material. MFB policy #70 titled Air Quality state, "We oppose...Any ban on the burning of biodegradable household waste."

We appreciate the work of Representative Ken Kurtz in sponsoring the legislation and the Department of Environmental Quality in considering workable solutions for our industry.

We appreciate your consideration of our comments and the impacts to the agricultural industry in Michigan. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me at (517) 323-7000 ext. 2044 or email at msmego@michfb.com.